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January 15, 2014

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## **Cook County Board President Toni Preckwinkle Recognized as Leader in Energy Efficiency**

CHICAGO – Cook County Board President Toni Preckwinkle, whose commitment to improved energy efficiency has saved taxpayers millions of dollars, was recognized today with the Midwest Energy Efficiency Alliance's (MEEA) 2014 Inspiring Efficiency Leadership Award.

Since 2010, Preckwinkle's administration has implemented several highly effective projects to reduce the energy costs of county government operations. The improvements have created jobs, reduced emissions and saved money for Cook County taxpayers.

To help create a vision for the County's sustainability efforts, Preckwinkle appointed Deborah Stone as the county's first Chief Sustainability Officer and created the county's first Sustainability Advisory Council.

With her team in place, Preckwinkle has led several innovative efforts to cut energy use and improve services for county residents, including the largest single-phase Guaranteed Energy Performance Contracting (GEPC) project ever undertaken by a county. The project will implement energy upgrades at the nation's second-largest public health system and the nation's largest single-site county jail. The energy saved through the project will cover its \$60 million estimated cost, allowing the upgrades to be completed at no cost to taxpayers.

Through this GEPC project, the county will also be able to reduce energy use and emissions by 20 percent, create 600 local construction and technology jobs and secure \$237,000 in Illinois energy rebate revenues in 2013, with more than \$1 million projected in 2014.

Under Preckwinkle's leadership, the county has also partnered with local governments, nonprofits and businesses. For instance, with funding from the U.S. Department of Energy through the Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant, the county was able to partner with 28 municipalities and 19 non-profits on more than 90 energy efficiency projects with the potential for more than \$2.3 million in cost savings over the first five years.

"Toni Preckwinkle and Cook County have raised the bar for other counties and municipalities across the nation," said MEEA Executive Director Doug Newman. "As budgets and resources shrink, energy efficiency is one way governments can continue providing essential services and do more with less."

Bestowed annually at the Midwest Energy Solutions Conference ([www.meeaconference.org](http://www.meeaconference.org)), MEEA's Leadership Award is presented to the organization or individual who has served as an exemplary leader in support of energy efficiency in their precinct.

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**About Midwest Energy Solutions Conference**

The Midwest Energy Solutions Conference is the largest event of its kind in the region. Each year it brings together a broad range of private- and public-sector thought leaders from around the nation who share a vested interest in energy efficiency. Now in its 12th year, the conference continues to grow as energy efficiency investment across the Midwest increases.

The conference is presented by the **Midwest Energy Efficiency Alliance (MEEA)**, the region's source on energy efficiency. Formed in 2000, MEEA is committed to advancing sound energy efficiency programs, policies and priorities in the Midwest. MEEA's membership represents a broad consortium of energy stakeholders from across a 13-state area.

[www.mwalliance.org](http://www.mwalliance.org)